

43rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT • ASSEMBLY DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS CHAIR

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Jorgensen: JFC Republicans Deliver Swift Kicks to Public Schools

MADISON – Assembly Democratic Caucus Chair and State Representative Andy Jorgensen (D-Milton) today harshly criticized Republicans on the powerful Joint Finance Committee for an overnight vote to siphon \$48 million over the next two years from Wisconsin public schools to fund the statewide expansion of the private, unaccountable voucher school program.

"Voucher school lobbyists can light up their big, fat cigars today, after getting everything they could have hoped for and more from Joint Finance Republicans," said Jorgensen. "Unfortunately, students in our public schools will pay dearly for it."

Joint Finance Republicans say they've reduced the cuts Governor Scott Walker proposed, but delivered new pain in the form of the voucher expansion.

"Republicans are looking for pats on the back after delivering swift kicks to our schools," said Jorgensen. "Don't fall for their lines, folks. Republicans are cutting public schools to the point of closure."

Their plan would increase yearly vouchers to \$7,200 per K-8 student and \$7,800 per high school student and expand the program statewide, a move which the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau states could cost taxpayers \$48 million this biennium.

The Republican motion also snuck a controversial proposal into the budget, increasing funding for special needs students at private voucher schools to \$12,000 each year without setting standards for these individuals' educational experience. Any money going to voucher schools is taken from the general school aids fund, meaning that public schools will see less support.

"Republicans are setting up two school systems: one the state oversees and the other the state does not. The problem is, taxpayers have to foot the bill for both, and that's not right," said Jorgensen. "We should be investing in public education, fixing whatever problems might exist, not padding the pockets of corporate 'educators' or their sweet-talking lobbyists. Our children deserve better."

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